



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

**For Immediate Release**  
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## **VA News Release** **COVID-19 Patient Update**

**Mann-Grandstaff**  
**VA Medical Center**

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(Spokane, WA) Mann-Grandstaff VA Medical Center is entering its third week of the important mission of admitting and providing round-the-clock care to the coronavirus patients transferred from the WA State Veterans Home (SVH) in Spokane.

Just this week, three patients who have recovered from COVID-19 at Mann-Grandstaff VAMC (MGVAMC) were transferred back to the SVH. Starting April 24<sup>th</sup>, SVH began the transfer of COVID-19 positive patients to the federal VA medical center campus. In anticipation of a medical surge of patients expected during this pandemic, MGVAMC staff converted the facility's community living center and hospice rooms into a COVID-19 patient unit, isolated away from the main hospital building.

"The realities of the complex medical issues and co-morbidities of these patients from SVH, including those receiving end-of-life care even before their transfer here, all make this an even bigger challenge during this pandemic," explained Dr. Camtu Thai, attending physician at MGVAMC's COVID-19 unit. "In addition to the concern for their wellbeing, we need to be thoughtful about the patient and family's emotions too."

The nursing home patients received from SVH range between 44 and 99-years old and were receiving long-term care prior to MGVAMC's efforts to help WA state DVA overcome a COVID-19 outbreak within its 100-bed unit in downtown Spokane.

Dr. Thai, a hospitalist who began her duties at MGVAMC in January, described working and managing staff and patients inside an isolated COVID-19 unit at VA is an entirely new challenge, but one she welcomes and is prepared to meet based on her unique training and experience. She has held a dying patient's hand and also an Ipad to allow a family member to say good-bye to her husband. "Even though the patient was barely still with us, I watched his breathing immediately improve upon hearing his wife's voice for the last time. It was a moving experience," said Dr. Thai.

The goals are to provide a supportive and safe environment, attend to many of the patients' complex medical issues, and provide the appropriate end-of-life care for hospice patients, while continuing to closely monitor these vulnerable patients for signs of medical and emotional decompensation," said Dr. Thai.

The complexity of caring for COVID-19 positive patients could, and already has, required VA to transfer some of the SVH Veterans to an even higher level of care at Sacred Heart Medical Center. As of May 8<sup>th</sup>, there have been 6 patients in the COVID unit receiving Hospice care. Four have passed away peacefully. When possible, the COVID unit staff have been able to carry-out the VA's time-honored, Last Salute for these Veterans.

(more)

“Some of these Veterans and spouses that came to us were already facing serious health issues in addition to COVID-19 infection,” explained Dr. Robert Fischer, Mann-Grandstaff VA Medical Center Director.

Still, he says, “we’re determined and proud to assist WDVA in the care of Veterans and their spouses. We are all learning more about this disease each day and I am confident we are collectively making a difference in the fight against the Coronavirus outbreak and the lives of our Veterans. We are carefully managing resources, including staff, PPE, and most importantly – a safe environment for our patients and employees at all times. This effort is possible because of the dedicated nurses, physicians, technician, therapists and staff providing compassionate and skilled care every day.”

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